



Department of State TELEGRAM

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E.O. 12386: DECL: OADR
TAGS: PREL, UR, AF
SUBJECT: SOVIET COVERAGE OF POPA GENERAL SECRETARY
NAJIBULLAH

SUMMARY

2. SINCE NAJIBULLAH BECAME POPA GENERAL SECRETARY,
THE SOVIET MEDIA HAVE GIVEN STEADY COVERAGE TO
HIS ACTIVITIES. THE MEDIA'S MESSAGE IS THAT
THE POPA IS IN CONTROL, AND THERE IS PROGRESS
IN AFGHANISTAN--THE SAME MEDIA MESSAGE WHEN KARMAI
WAS IN CHARGE. END SUMMARY

3. SINCE NAJIBULLAH BECAME POPA GENERAL SECRETARY,
SOVIET CENTRAL NEWSPAPERS HAVE PUBLISHED A
STEADY STREAM OF ARTICLES ON HIS ACTIVITIES,
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INCLUDING HIS SPEECH TO THE POPA'S 18TH PLENUM.

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TASS DISPATCHES ON MAY 8 AND MAY 11 REPORTED HIS MEETINGS WITH OVER FOUR HUNDRED REPRESENTATIVES OF VARIOUS TRIBES, AND REPRESENTATIVES OF THE MINISTRY OF ISLAM, THE HIGH COUNCIL OF THE ULEHAS AND CLERGY, AND HAZARA CLERGY AND INTELLIGENTSIA. ACCORDING TO THE TASS REPORTS, THESE GROUPS ENDORSED THE POPA'S INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL POLICIES.

4. NAJIBULLAH'S LINE, AS PLAYED BY THE SOVIET PRESS, HAS BEEN RELATIVELY OPTHISTIC. ACCORDING TO TASS, NAJIBULLAH IS CLAIMING PROGRESS, E.G.:

--THAT NATIONAL INCOME NOW EXCEEDS PRE-REVOLUTION LEVELS;

--THE DRA'S INTERNATIONAL AUTHORITY IS GROWING;

--THE NUMBER OF COMMUNIST PARTY MEMBERS IS INCREASING, AND

--THE MILITARY IS MEETING THE MUJAHIDEEN CHALLENGES, ALTHOUGH IT MUST WORK MORE EFFECTIVELY.

5. JUDGING FROM THE SOVIET PRESS REPORTS, NAJIBULLAH HAS NOT CHANGED THE POPA'S BASIC POLICIES. HE HAS REAFFIRMED THE POPA'S COMMITMENT TO THE APRIL REVOLUTION AND THE "CARDINAL TRANSFORMATION" OF AFGHAN SOCIETY; TO ITS DEMAND FOR AN END TO OUTSIDE INTEREFERENCE; AND TO THE NON-RENEWAL
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OF SUCH INTERFERENCE AS THE BASIS FOR A POLITICAL SETTLEMENT.

6. COMMENT

WE SEE LITTLE NEW IN NAJIBULLAH'S APPROACH. THUS, ALTHOUGH KARNAL HAS BEEN MOVED TO THE SIDELINES, THE POPA LINE--AS REPRESENTED BY THE SOVIET PRESS--REMAINS THE SAME.

7. KABUL - MINIMIZE CONSIDERED.
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